



THE
ADOPTED DAUGHTER;

OR,

THE LITTLE ACTORS.

WITH COLOURED FRONTISPIECE.

LONDON AND NEW YORK:
FREDERICK WARNE AND CO.

DALZIEL BROTHERS, CAMDEN PRESS, LONDON/W. 6



THE
ADOPTED DAUGHTER.

CHAPTER I.

ON an Autumn day nearly sixty years ago, a most remarkable-looking equipage drew up before the door of an inn in the beautiful old city of Nuremberg. The conveyance in question was a sort of long van with little windows at the sides, and was drawn with a weary air by an old chestnut horse. It would have been difficult to decide which was the thinnest and most withered—the old hack, the brown and bent coachman, sitting in front of the waggon, or the sharp-nosed gentleman in shabby genteel garments, walking by the side. The chambermaid of the inn had put her head out of the window to watch the new arrival.

"What is it, lass?" asked the waiter.

"Only strolling players," answered she, shutting the window.

"I don't know whether I shall keep them," soliloquized the landlord; "it is not long since a conjuror ran away without paying me a penny."

During this time the waggon had come to a halt,

The Adopted Daughter.

although nobody was to be seen about the place to give them a welcome. The chambermaid could not resist, however, going to see what was hid under the roof of this singular vehicle, curious to know if she should find wax figures or wild beasts, a panorama or a giantess, but there was neither the one nor the other—only two children, wrapped in old shawls and mantles which did not seem to have been made for them, began scrambling out of the van. The girl threw back an old brown hood, and sprang lightly over the coachman, who was going to lift her down. The boy descended more slowly, and then seated himself on the little form before the house, looking with wondering eyes at the narrow streets, and the houses with pointed gables decorated here and there with artistic carving.

"Can we remain here for the night?" asked the sharp-nosed gentleman in a somewhat important tone.

"I am very sorry," returned the thriving landlord, who had now made his appearance, and did not seem particularly pleased with his company, "I am very sorry, but all the house is engaged; I have really not a single room at liberty, not even a garret."

The traveller seemed cast down at this news, and, grumbling to himself, was sending the brown coachman to harness the horse to the van again, when, just at this moment, the little girl came to his help.

"What! not one little place left in such a great big house?" asked she, innocently.

"Not one, my little maid," answered the landlord in a more friendly tone.

"O, you certainly cannot know!" cried the little one eagerly; "you see my papa is so thin he can find a place anywhere, and we can sleep in the van, and Francis with his horse; and if somebody were to sew papa, Francis, Cherubino, and me together, they could not make such a good, stout papa out of us as you are."

The curious bystanders, who had gradually assembled, laughed outright, and the fat landlord laughed with them, and promised to look for a room. Francis

The Adopted Daughter.

led his horse back to the stables, and took it quite good-naturedly when two mischievous lads asked him if he would sell his race-horse for twenty louis-d'or, and the hostler advised him to hire it to a hatmaker, who could use the bones for pegs to hang his hats on. He only shook his head and said, "Never sell brave steed."

Mr. Lionet, as the owner of the splendid equipage called himself, went to the public room with the children, where they made their supper on thin soup. Francis contented himself with a glass of beer, and Mr. Lionet drank a little wine, at the same time writing out an advertisement, which Francis took at once to the printing-office. The announcement was as follows:—

"The celebrated and well-known Lionet family have just arrived in this city, where they hope to receive the same flattering reception in which they have rejoiced in all the first cities of Germany. The first performance will be given to-morrow evening in the saloon of the Blue Eagle Hotel.

"Mr. Lionet will first astonish the public by his wonderful conjuring with cards and other performances of natural magic. Zephyrine Lionet will then go through a dance *à la* Psyche, and by her grace and agility enchant all beholders.

"The celebrated clown, Mr. Francis Desbordes, will excite universal merriment by his droll remarks and performances.

"Zephyrine, the young Grace, and Cherubino Lionet (called the Wonder-Child) will perform the celebrated Biscayan national dance with the tambourine, which will call forth general delight.

"The whole performance will be enlivened by the drolleries of the clown, Mr. Francis Desbordes."

During the time Mr. Lionet was writing this promising announcement, Zephyrine had been making acquaintance with the household, and now appeared in triumph with a few hot potatoes, which she shared with Cherubino. Whilst the hungry boy was greedily devouring the morsel, she whispered to him:

The Adopted Daughter.

"Only be patient, and to-morrow, after the performance, we shall get some roasted meat."

With this enticing prospect, the little ones sought their nest in the waggon, which stood in a barn, and, burying themselves in their respective corners amongst the old clothes, carpets, and straw, which they found there, soon slept as soundly as the children of royalty under silken coverlets.

CHAPTER II.

THE FIRST MORNING.

THE rayless sun of an autumn morning had lighted up with a red tinge the narrow street where Mr. Lionet had taken up his quarters. He was gone to fetch the printed bills to post up, and the children already stood there in full costume.

Zephyrine, who was smartly dressed in a velvet bodice with bows, a muslin skirt, a wreath of flowers in her black hair, and dainty boots on her little feet, had seated herself on a stone, and looked down laughingly at Cherubino, who was leaning his head against her with a melancholy air.

"Are you sleepy, poor Cherubino?" asked she, with good-natured irony; "you had better go into the waggon again and sleep it out, although, to be sure, it is already eight o'clock."

"I am only cold," said the boy.

"You are cold! O, you poor Wonder-Child! and you've got a velvet jacket on like a prince, and a waist-coat, and goodness knows what besides. Only look at

The Adopted Daughter.

my white frock and my bare arms, and I am not a bit cold." And winding her soft arms round his neck, she continued, "You poor frozen laddie! creak into the big drum; the wind can't blow in there."

"And it is growing colder every day, and winter will soon be here, when everything is cold," sighed little Cherubino.

"Yes, in winter it is certainly miserable," agreed Zephirine, "and who knows what sort of a room we may get into again. I am only glad that Herculina is not with us any longer. O, what a great big thing she was! If she had been with us now the fat landlord would never have taken us into his house. Then you know we shall give all the performances in a warm saloon; and this winter we shall have a pillow to sleep on, now Herculina is gone. And then, do you not remember how last winter we lodged with the baker's good wife, who gave us stale white bread sometimes, and once some cake? Perhaps we may come to such good people again. Then summer will come, and the sun will shine, and it will be warm weather, and we shall go through beautiful large cities, and make coffee under the trees, and nests in the hay, and Francis will gather nuts for us. O, it will be charming!" And the little maiden clapped her hands over the pleasures of summer, whilst winter stood at the door.

She did not succeed in making her companion more cheerful, and he said in a mournful voice: "I should like so for once to stay where we are, and to live in a nice large house, and sleep in a proper bed, and go to school in proper clothes like other boys."

"Oh, not to school," laughed Zephirine; "children get flogged there, papa says."

"Not if they are industrious," said Cherubino, eagerly; "the baker's son told me so."

"And children who go to school cannot dance, sir; they dance in this way;" and she hopped about, and shuffled in a circle with her body bent nearly double, something like a young bear, in such a comical way,

The Adopted Daughter.

that even Cherubino could not help laughing ; but he said, very gravely :

"It is all the same to me ; I would rather not be able to dance. I am sure learning is much better."

CHAPTER III.

THE CHRISTENING.

THE children continued disputing eagerly for some time, until their attention was suddenly attracted in another direction. From a small side street, close to them, appeared a silent little procession ; first an old woman, carrying a baby in her arms, which was wrapped in a long silk shawl, and two children in holiday attire, tripping by her side ; the boy and girl were just the same age as our little friends, and the boy now and then tried to take a peep under the shawl, but was always prevented doing so by a stately and well-dressed lady, who, with a gentleman, closed the little train.

"What is that ?" asked Cherubino.

"A christening," whispered Zephirine, who always knew more of the world than the boy. She had spoken quite softly, although the people were already out of hearing.

"What are they going to do ?" continued the boy.

"I don't know myself," said Zephirine ; "but come, we will follow them : papa will not be back for a long while."

The Adopted Daughter.

The two children hastened to the church, and, slipping through a side door, entered unnoticed.

It was the first time they had been in such a building, and, filled with wonder and astonishment, they gazed at the beautiful groined arches, at the pictures on the walls, and the cross on the altar. It was as though a new world had been opened to them, the existence of which they had never even dreamt of; and Cherubino took off his cap, as he saw the men do, and Zephirine folded her hands like the little fair-haired girl, without knowing why. They did not dare to move from their places—scarcely to breathe, but, with eyes fixed intently on the group, watched to see what would be done with the child when the shawl was taken off. That the man in the long white garment was a clergyman, Zephirine knew quite well, and, like one enchanted, she listened to the solemn words he spoke over the child. Then one of the gentlemen took it to the minister, who sprinkled water on its forehead from a shining bowl, and repeated with a clear, distinct voice, the names, Hermann August. The two children had no idea what it all meant, and continued looking silently on, with inquiring glances.

But the clergyman's address was ended, and the company prepared to depart. Cherubino and Zephirine made the best of their way out of the church, and remained standing outside the door. As the little train came out, the two Nuremberg children were the last, and Zephirine, who was never shy, took courage and plucked the little maid by the sleeve of her pretty blue frock, saying,

"Here, what have they been doing with that baby?"

Little Mary turned round, opening her large blue eyes very wide at the unknown girl in her fantastic dress, but answered in a friendly tone,

"Don't you know? That is our little brother, who has been christened."

"Yes, but why?"

"How stupid!" interrupted Theodore, Mary's

The Adopted Daughter.

brother. "Why, that people may know what his name is, to be sure ! must he be called baby all his life ?"

"Not only for that," said Mary, correcting him, "for father could have given him a name. But have you forgotten what mother told us yesterday, that children are christened because our Saviour had said, 'Suffer little children to come unto me ;' and when a child has been christened it belongs to the Saviour, and He sends His angels to guard and take care of it."

"And who is the Saviour ?" asked Cherubino, timidly.

Mary and Theodore looked at him in astonishment ; was it possible that such a great boy did not know who Jesus Christ was ?

"Are you heathens, that you don't know anything about the Saviour ?" asked Theodore.

"Oh, we are nothing !" said Zephirine, innocently.

"But we know that God made the world—not the houses—but the trees, and the water, and animals," said Cherubino, eagerly ; anxious to tell what little they knew.

"You know something, at any rate !" said Mary, encouragingly, not wishing to hurt the feelings of the pretty little strangers ; "and the rest I can tell you. Look !" continued she, drawing them to the church door, happy in her childish importance of being able to teach so much to others, "look there, at the Man on the cross, standing on the altar ; that is the Saviour ; and there He is again, in that large picture on the wall. He came down from heaven because people were so wicked, to tell them about God, and what they must do to make Him love them again ; and because we are none of us good, and could not go to God, He died for us ; and whilst He bore all so bravely, and died of His own free will, God was not angry any longer ; and, if we are good and pious, and think about Jesus Christ, we can all go to heaven. O, but this is not nearly all," continued she, glowing with eagerness.

The Adopted Daughter.

"I know so many beautiful stories about Him ; but I cannot tell you all at once."

The little strangers listened with open mouths, unable to take in and understand these new ideas all at once.

"But where do you come from, that you don't know all this?" asked Theodore.

"O, we come from everywhere," said Zephirine ; "we travel about the world, dancing, and cannot go to any school."

"But mamma tells us about Jesus Christ. Have you no mamma?"

"No ; she died a long time ago, but we have a papa ; but perhaps he does not know himself, because he used to be a Frenchman," said Zephirine, apologetically. "We had Herculina, to be sure ; but then she was no mamma."

"Who was Herculina ? What a queer name !"

"She was a great fat woman, with a red face," put in Cherubino. "She was not bad, but she ate so much that there was nothing left for us. She used to wash and mend our clothes, or cook in the morning, and in the evening she lifted heavy iron weights, and people hammered on her without its doing her any harm."

"And where is she now?" again asked Theodore, who was struck with astonishment at this singular family.

"When we were in Stutgard, during the fair-time, there was a man in the next booth to us who had a fat ox to show, and he was jealous of us ; and when papa played the organ for the people to come, he drummed so loudly that nobody could hear it. He wanted to have Herculina, but at first she would not go to him, and then he married her ; and now she is gone away with him, and I think he lets the great ox trample on her, and even that does not harm her."

The children had yet much to tell, for the life of each was new to the other, when a neatly dressed maidservant came running to them.

The Adopted Daughter.

"O, I've found you at last, children! Won't you come and have some coffee and christening cake?"

The parting was now a hasty one, but Mary did not forget in her hurry to shake hands with her new acquaintances, and Zephirine invited her to the evening performance.

Mary and Theodore took their departure, as eager to tell their parents of the strange children who knew nothing of Jesus Christ, as they were to taste the christening cake.

Zephirine and Cherubino wandered back again to the inn, and as they had nearly reached it Francis beckoned them with impatient gestures to hasten their steps, for it was time for them to ride round the town and show themselves.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PERFORMANCE.

FRANCIS had been in great anxiety about the children, and was so happy to see them again that he forgot to scold them for running away. The bony horse stood ready bridled at the door, with a gaudy blue cloth thrown over him, which had been well patched by Herculina. Mr. Lionet, in a sort of cavalier costume, led the steed by the bridle, the two children being placed on its back; Francis, as buffoon, in various-coloured patches and a high-peaked hat, sprang about in front with laughable gesticulations. In all the principal streets and houses he halted, blew his

The Adopted Daughter.

trumpet, and announced, with all sorts of nonsense, the performance that was to take place in the evening.

"You see, ladies and gentlemen, the two Wonder-Children, Zephirine and Cherubino. Zephirine, if she did but stretch out her foot, could fly over that tower, and would spring back again on the tip of her toes!"

He praised his master and Cherubino in the same manner, and a merry troop of school-boys followed with shouts and laughter.

The two children had long been accustomed to this sort of thing, and it had often given Zephirine a great deal of amusement to throw nutshells at the little crowd, or pull droll faces at them, but to-day she sat still and motionless; and Cherubino never once raised his eyes. He could think of nothing but the church—that great high building—and of the baby that had been blessed, and all that little Mary had told him about Jesus Christ; and then he pictured the two children sitting comfortably with father, mother, and little brother, eating christening cake, till his eyes filled with tears, and he wondered quietly and sadly why he could not live like other children.

Similar thoughts seemed to be passing through the usually merry heart of Zephirine; for when the horse stood still, and the clown was jumping about and talking nonsense, she stooped down to her father and whispered,

"Papa, have I ever been christened?"

Mr. Lionet lifted up his head, and, with a look of astonishment from under his cavalier hat, said,

"To be sure: what has put it into your head to ask such a foolish question?"

"But where, papa? in a church?"

"Certainly not in a stable. I think it was in a town on the frontiers, and by a Catholic clergyman; but I don't remember myself very clearly."

"And do I belong to the Saviour?"

"Nonsense! to be sure—don't think about such things now, but look a little more cheerful."

The Adopted Daughter.

And, somewhat embarrassed, he went to the other side and led the horse forward.

The ride was over, and the children were allowed to dine with their papa—very sparingly, it is true; but they were comforted with the promise of a good supper if the receipts were satisfactory after the performance.

They would have been only too glad to go out again in the afternoon; but as they had only one gala-dress, which was to be worn in the evening, their papa did not permit it, and they were obliged to undress and remain at home, wrapped in torn old mantles. As they believed it possible that their acquaintances of the morning might hunt them out, they were ashamed of their ragged old clothes, and crouched in a dark corner of the room, whispering to each other about what they had heard, Cherubino yearning more than ever to live like other children, and hear about God and Christ; his little soul was strangely moved by the events of the morning.

The fat, good-natured landlord sent the children some coffee, and Mr. Lionet amused himself all the afternoon with card-playing; but as he won every game nobody would play with him at last, declaring that he was a wizard.

Evening gradually advanced, and the two little actors were dressed once more and betook themselves into the saloon, which was badly lighted, and still worse warmed. The room filled well, not because of the enticing placards, but because of the two pretty children, who had pleased everybody that had seen them in their ride round the town.

In the front row sat Mary and Theodore, with their father, a well-to-do tradesman. He was not much in the mood for such a scene after the christening of his infant, but his little boy and girl had pleaded so earnestly, and what they had told him of the forsaken state of the poor little performers had raised in him the desire to see something of them himself.

Francis remained standing at the door blowing his

The Adopted Daughter.

trumpet and beating his drum until the saloon was full; then, slipping on his Harlequin jacket, he ran into the room tumbling head over heels, to the inexpressible delight of the younger part of the audience. Mr. Lionet, in his cavalier mantle, advanced with a child by each hand, and looked so very respectable, that the lads on the back seats felt a tremendous respect for him when he took off his cap with the long feather, and bowed so low that his sharp nose nearly touched the ground. Cherubino also took off his cap, and Zephyrine made such a graceful courtesy that everybody clapped their hands, and Mary was regularly proud of her acquaintance.

Francis then brought a table, and Mr. Lionet began the exhibition of his magical powers, which consisted of the common tricks that have been practised by all conjurors for nearly a hundred years. Francis was compelled to swallow a quantity of flax, which he did with comical unwillingness and dreadful grimaces; then, amidst a roar of applause, his back was cut open, and the flax reappeared as innumerable yards of tape. Mr. Lionet next begged for a watch, which, to the dismay of his audience, he pounded in a mortar; the broken fragments were shown about and then put into a bag under the table, out of which, in a short time afterwards, Francis, with a spring nearly as high as the ceiling, brought the watch unharmed. Then Mr. Lionet performed some pretty tricks with cards, which were imitated in a clumsy and laughable manner by the clown. The audience, however, who were waiting for the children, soon began to be impatient, and the first act was brought to a close. Mr. Lionet appeared again with a violin, and Francis with his trumpet, and amidst the very indifferent music produced by the two, began the dance with the tambourine; Cherubino stood with his staff in the middle of the room, ready to strike it and join Zephyrine as she flew by him; but this evening his heart was less than ever in the performance, and he seemed scarcely to hear the tones which

The Adopted Daughter.

were to allure him to the dance, nor to see the threatening looks of his papa; but Zephyrine, who lived in the dance, flew past him with such graceful movements, ringing her tambourine in his ear, drawing him on with such a roguish expression, and waltzing round him, her feet scarcely seeming to touch the ground, that his dulness was hardly perceived, or else taken for an intentional contrast to her singular agility; Zephyrine concluded by twirling round on one foot, holding her tambourine high above her head, and then making a deep obeisance. A storm of approbation burst forth, and even they who had seen celebrated artistes were astonished at the child's grace and finished performance, and the tambourine, which, at a hint from her father, she carried round, was soon well filled.

As she went past Mary and Theodore she drew back, blushing deeply, and shaking her head, said, "Not you."

They had filled their pockets with cakes from the christening feast, and, begging her to take them, looked expectingly at their father, thinking he must give their friend a shilling at the very least: he did not do so, however, but said,

"I will speak to the father of these children before going away."

CHAPTER V.

THE EXAMINATION.

THE audience now retired in spite of the desire of Francis to do something more for their amusement. Mary and Theodore remained behind with

The Adopted Daughter.

their father, Cherubino came forward, and the four children were soon eagerly talking together. Mr. Lionet could not tell how his children had made their acquaintance, and Zephyrine said, in hasty explanation,

"Oh, you know, papa, they are the children who were in the church when their little brother was christened, and they know about so many, many beautiful things."

Mr. Winter turned with great politeness to Mr. Lionet, and, after complimenting him on the talent of his little girl, asked,

"Are they both your children?"

"Certainly," said Mr. Lionet, but with some embarrassment, as it seemed to Mr. Winter.

"You seem to have married late in life," continued he, looking first at the old and withered face of the conjuror, and then at the young children.

"Yes—my little girl—that is—they are both the children of my second wife. My first—a most talented rider—unhappily left me to join a troop of tight-rope dancers. I afterwards formed a second marriage with a person who had a small exhibition of wax figures: she did not live very long, and the exhibition was destroyed in the great fire at G——. My knowledge of natural magic, and the awakening talent of my little girl, have hitherto made me a living. From my boy I expected much, but he has disappointed me; there is nothing to be made out of him—he has no ambition."

"You are a Frenchman, your children told mine."

"I come from Alsace, but have been a long time in Germany; the present uneasy state of things in France is not favourable to art and science."

Mr. Winter could not forbear smiling to hear the conjuror giving his tricks so much importance, and asked again—"How do you think of obtaining the necessary education for your children, with your wandering life?"

"They are still very young," said Mr. Lionet, who

The Adopted Daughter.

seemed becoming more and more uncomfortable under this examination ; "and with such an excellent cultivation of the bodily powers, the education of the mind will be a very easy matter afterwards."

"Do you think so?" said Mr. Winter, with a doubtful smile.

"A little while ago," continued the conjuror, "I had a very respectable female, who taught my little daughter needlework. She was an athlete of wonderful strength : as I have lost her, I shall look out for another lady who can direct the children's education, a part of which I shall, of course, undertake myself."

Mr. Winter had no great faith in the educational powers of either the "lady" or the gentleman, but he would not offend Mr. Lionet for the sake of his children, for whom he felt the greatest compassion ; so he only persuaded him to remain longer in Nuremberg, where his little daughter seemed to have found so much favour. Before saying adieu he invited the two little performers to come to his house, for he could not permit any intercourse with his own children, excepting under proper control.

During the time Zephirine and Cherubino were refreshing themselves with the long-promised roast veal and sweetmeats, and Mr. Lionet was counting the rich receipts of the evening, Theodore and Mary hastened home to tell their mother about the evening performance and the wonderful cleverness of their new friend, and were taken to their clean and comfortable beds and fell asleep after saying their prayers, whilst the little strangers crept into their van.

Zephirine had already closed her eyes, and composed herself for sleep, when Cherubino whispered from his corner—"Sister."

"What do you want?"

"Theodore told me to-day that they said a prayer every night and morning, and then God sent angels to take care of them."

"But I did not see any with them."

The Adopted Daughter.

"People cannot see them, but they are there for all that; his mother says so."

"Then, of course, it must be true."

"If we could only pray, Zephirine. To-morrow I will ask Theodore to teach me how, but I wish we could say a prayer to-night. Bethink you if you can?"

"I will try;" and folding her hands, she began: "Dear Saviour! we don't know how to pray yet, but we are christened—please send an angel to take care of us two—we are so lonely—and we have no mother."

Comforted, Zephirine laid her head down and soon fell asleep. Not so Cherubino; he lay long awake with his sad little heart.

CHAPTER VI.

INQUIRIES.

MR. WINTER was a truly pious man, doing good with the means with which God had blessed him, and unable to see any one in need without his heart yearning to help him. The night after the performance he walked long up and down his room, unable to get the two children out of his mind. It was evident that they would never receive even the common rudiments of education, and there was nothing before them for the future but a wretched, vagabondizing life; and yet he did not see how he was to aid them. That Mr. Lionet would not part with his daughter, who was his principal means of living, he was quite sure, supposing he were to undertake the entire education of both; and then again, he had no right to take the

The Adopted Daughter.

children from their father. The latter would most likely be more willing to part with the boy, who was less active, and seemed also very delicate; but would it be wise to separate the brother and sister, whose love for each other might possibly be a mutual comfort, and a protection against future ruin? •

It occurred to Mr. Winter again, that Mr. Lionet always seemed embarrassed when his son was mentioned, and showed an unaccountable indifference, if not dislike to him. Then he had said, that the mother had died directly after his daughter's birth, and yet she seemed older than the boy. It appeared to Mr. Winter, that Cherubino was connected with some recollection in his mind, which, in spite of all his puzzling, would not be clear, and at last he retired to rest wearied out with thinking.

Bright thoughts came in the night. Mrs. Winter did not know why her husband sprang out of bed so early the next morning, and, after dressing himself quickly, why he ran up into his private room and began turning out a chest-full of old newspapers, the careful accumulation of years. When the children fetched their father to breakfast, they were astonished to find the room strewn over with newspapers, and their usually order-loving father rummaging in the midst of them. They stood in amazement, watching him opening one bundle after another, looking through it and then throwing it down, too absorbed to perceive his children. At last he drew out a paper triumphantly and ran down stairs with it.

"I have found it!" cried he exultingly to his wife, who could not imagine what he meant.

"What have you found?"

"I will tell you afterwards," said he more quietly, it occurring to him that he must be cautious in making his suspicions known.

After the children were gone to school he brought out the newspaper, and read an advertisement to his wife, which was printed in French and German, as follows:

The Adopted Daughter.

"I, Chevalier d'Ormont, offer 600 francs to any one who can give information about my only child Leon d'Ormont: in all probability the latter was taken by his nurse to her native village in Rhenish Prussia, to which place she took flight on the outburst of the Revolution. It has never been ascertained whether or not she took articles of value from my castle, as it was immediately afterwards plundered by the revolutionary troops. The name of the woman was Margaret Rothe, and I have been hitherto unable to obtain any tidings of her. The child was fifteen months old at the time it was lost, and possesses no particular marks by which it can be recognized. I have taken up my residence at Innspruch" (here followed the address), "and beg any person who can give the least intelligence of my child to do so without delay."

"Well, how can this advertisement help you? it is already five years old," said Mrs. Winter, looking at the paper.

"Just because it *is* five years old," answered Mr. Winter, eagerly. "I was a member of the council at the time when the chevalier was here himself on his tour through all the large German cities, making inquiries in person after his lost child. I should never have thought of the advertisement, if I had not seen the conjuror's son yesterday, and since then I have been puzzling myself to remember where I have seen the boy, or somebody very like him. Yesterday I could not bethink me, and whether I dreamt it or not during the night, I don't know; but when I awoke this morning the Chevalier d'Ormont's figure stood clearly before my mind's eye, and gave me the idea of hunting up the paper with his advertisement in it. The circumstance was particularly impressed on my mempry, because our Theodore was just two years old at the time, and our greatest joy, and therefore I felt the warmest sympathy for the unhappy father."

"Oh, yes, I recollect you telling me about it now," said his wife; "but what makes you think this con-

The Adopted Daughters.

juror's boy is the lost child? I am at a loss to understand you."

"Why, because he is as like the chevalier as he can possibly be; and, putting all things together, he can scarcely belong to this travelling player, whilst his age agrees exactly"—The benevolent man quite lost his breath, in the zealous defence of his idea.

"What happened to the child at the time, and how did it come to pass that it was taken by the nurse in her flight?"

"When the Revolution broke out the chevalier was in Paris with his wife, whom he had taken there for the benefit of medical advice, for a disease from which she had been suffering for a long time, and the child was left in care of the servants. His castle was one of the first attacked, and the servants, rendered incapable of defending it by their fear, were driven out and dispersed here and there. The nurse, a good-natured but frivolous person, from the chevalier's description, appears to have fled with the child. It is said that she was seen in the company of a low fellow, formerly valet to her master. The chevalier himself was obliged to take flight, and brought his wife, who was dangerously ill from the shock and anxiety about her child, to a German watering-place. From thence he made all possible inquiries; but, in consequence of his not being able to leave his wife, and the disturbed state of the times, his efforts proved unavailing. After the death of his wife he travelled through Germany, seeking his child himself, and caused the advertisement I have just read to be put in the newspapers; but all was in vain."

Although Mrs. Winter had little faith in her husband's imagined discovery, she did not attempt to persuade him from writing immediately to the chevalier; and acceded to his wish, meanwhile, to let the children have free intercourse with each other.

The Adopted Daughter.

CHAPTER VII.

THE PLAYFELLOWS.

THERE was a joyful shout when Mr. Winter gave his children permission, on their holiday afternoon, to fetch the little strangers. Mr. Lionet was not so very willing to let them go, but he feared that any hesitation on his part would look suspicious ; so he allowed Zephyrine and Cherubino to put on their only gala dresses and go with their new companions.

It was an important event for the little Winters to go through the streets with the "Wonder-Children ;" and even the boys who were playing about only looked on from the distance at the dancing-boy and girl, as they skipped between the two Nuremberg children, half beside themselves with delight.

First of all, they were taken to Mrs. Winter's bedside to see the little brother. The former had always had a certain prejudice against travelling players ; but the sight of these pretty motherless children touched her heart, especially the boy, with his sad and gentle countenance, and, stroking his black curls, she got him to tell her of their life and doings.

"But, mother, you should see Zephyrine dance !" cried Mary.

"Yes, yes, Zephyrine must dance for you !" shouted Theodore ; and, although his mother declared that she quite believed she could do so beautifully without seeing it, the children persisted in giving her this enjoyment. The folding-doors into the sitting-room were opened, and cousin Paulina, who was nursing mother and children, must seat herself at the piano. Zephyrine had certainly not brought her tambourine with her ; but an old plaything of the children's, with

The Adopted Daughter.

bells, was hunted up and answered the same purpose. Cherubino could do nothing but look at the mother and baby, and hardly answered when he was spoken to ; but Zephirine needed no companion, the first tones of the music seemed to animate every limb. With her feet scarcely touching the floor now, she flew about so quickly that it was difficult to follow her movements ; then she bent and waved herself to and fro like a bird hovering in the air ; and although cousin Paulina had never played to such a dance in her life, the little maiden knew how to adapt herself to every note.

The house servants and apprentices had assembled at the room door, looking on with open eyes and mouths, the children clapped their hands, and their mother's eyes filled with tears, she could not tell why, as Zephirine, finishing her dance, knelt, with a graceful obeisance, at her feet.

"Where have you learnt to dance so prettily, little one?" asked Mrs. Winter.

"After papa's wax-work show was half burnt, we were with a theatrical company for a little while, and there was a lady there who taught Cherubino and me to dance ; then papa quarreled with the manager, and we went away with Francis. Then Herculina, who used to be in a menagerie, came to us."

"Could she dance too?"

"O, she dance !" cried Zephirine, laughing aloud. "Yes, like a bear. In the large towns papa always took us with him to see the ballet, and then I took notice and learnt the dances, and taught them to Cherubino."

"But would you not like to learn to do something else—to sew, to knit, or to read nice books?"

"O, to be sure ; but I should not always like to sit still, and be cooped up in a school-room ; dancing is such fun, and when I am grown up I shall have a beautiful horse, and be a circus rider—that will be charming !"

"Tight-rope dancer's blood," murmured Mrs. Winter,

The Adopted Daughter.

with a gentle shake of the head ; and, looking with increased sympathy at the boy, said : " And you, my little fellow ? "

" I don't like dancing ; sometimes it makes me ache all over, and I don't like to be always travelling about. "

The mother's heart was touched ; she asked no more questions, however, but sent the children to their play, after ordering them a plentiful supply of cake and milk.

Then Mary fetched her doll and doll's clothes, to the great delight of Zephirine, who had never had one of her own ; and there began such a dressing, and cutting out, and dressing again ; and Mary thought she had never played so nicely as with her new companion.

Theodore brought out his soldiers and picture-books : the first had little interest for his guest, but the latter were fully appreciated, and Theodore was only too much pleased to explain everything most minutely, and answer Cherubino's numerous questions.

Afterwards they played at hide-and-seek, and a variety of games.

" What a long stupid name you have, " said Theodore — " Cherubino ! it is a year long : we'll call you Bino, or Rubi ! "

Bino was decided upon.

" And Zephirine must allow herself to be called Zefi. "

And so the evening passed in merry play and laughter, and Francis came too soon to fetch the children home.



The Adopted Daughter.

CHAPTER●VIII.

THE PARTING.

WITH great impatience Mr. Winter awaited either to hear news from Innspruch, or to see M. d'Ormont himself. In five days came a letter from the owner of the house, in which the former had lived, saying that Chevalier d'Ormont had gone to his seat in Rhenish Prussia, the native place of the missing nurse, in hopes, in the course of time, of hearing something of his child's fate. The letter had been sent after him, but it might be a long time before he could either come or write. Mr. Winter was beside himself with impatience ; it was impossible to find a pretext for keeping Mr. Lionet any longer, for though Zephyrine was always well received, her father's and Francis's performances possessed so little variety, that they could not remain long in one place. Added to this, Mr. Lionet looked daily with less favour on the intercourse between the merchant's children and his own. Gherubino's distaste for "art," as the conjuror called it, became more and more decided ; and Zephyrine, who, with her coaxing, amiable ways, generally prevailed on her father to do what she liked, could hardly prevent the poor boy from being sometimes severely punished.

The intercourse between the children lasted ten days—ten days full of joy and pleasure, especially for the little strangers. As soon as good mamma Winter had convinced herself that no danger was to be feared for her own children in this communication, that the little strolling players used no low expressions, nor had any vulgar habits, she took them quite to her heart, and had warm dresses made for them out of her children's clothing, supplied them with under garments, begged

The Adopted Daughter.

cousin Paulina to teach Zefi, who caught up everything with wonderful quickness, knitting and a little sewing, and told Bino, better than his little friends were able to do, about God and the Saviour, and she had never had so attentive a listener.

On the eleventh day the waggon stood harnessed at the door of the inn ; the two children, in much better travelling dresses than when they arrived, were talking eagerly to their Nuremberg friends, who had filled their baskets and pockets with parting gifts from their kind mamma. Zephirine had already made the most delightful plans, how they would come again in spring, and how nice it would be when they went very often to the Winter's garden.

"Then our Bino will get rosy cheeks," said Mary, stroking the boy's pale face. Cherubino's eyes were full of tears, and, unable to get out a single word, he could only look lovingly at his friends.

At the same time Mr. Winter was having an earnest conversation with old Lionet. Without giving him an idea of his suspicions respecting the boy, he tried, in the course of conversation, to ascertain more about him.

"Are you not afraid," asked he, "that your little one is too delicate to carry on this dancing?"

"The lad, certainly, does less and less ; he is not wanting in natural grace ; but the fact is, he is idle. At present he must go on with it ; Zephirine, the little witch, will pull him through. Then the little pair look so nice together ; the public like anything of that sort. He eats so little, too, that his keep does not cost much ; Zephirine will, doubtless, make a brilliant career, and when she does not require him any longer for her dances, and he gets no stronger, I must think of some other branch of art for him. For natural magic he is not quick enough, I am afraid, and I have already thought of his going about with tame white mice, a very vulgar employment certainly ; but time will suggest some plan."

The Adopted Daughter.

"But he appears to have a taste for learning," continued Mr. Winter, who shuddered at this picture of the future. "If you found the means of giving him a good education, would you not be inclined to choose some other kind of occupation for him?"

"I cannot afford to spend anything more on him," said the conjuror, somewhat irritably. "He costs me ——" he stopped confused—"I must first see if nothing is to be found for him in any branch of art. If not, perhaps at some future time I may take the liberty of asking your advice on the subject." He concluded, evidently not a little piqued, and Mr. Winter could do nothing more.

The whole establishment of the inn had come out to take leave. The children, particularly the joyous Zefi, had become the favourites of the house. They had reaped a rich harvest in Nuremberg, and the proceeds from the previous day's performance, "for the benefit of Miss Zephirine," which had come off brilliantly, were especially satisfactory.

The children, with the exception of Theodore, parted with many tears; but the latter whispered to the weeping Cherubino, "Don't cry, it's only the girls that howl."

Zefi's rosy face, and Bino's little hand, waving his tear-stained handkerchief, were to be seen as long as the conveyance remained in sight. Then the Nuremberg children took their father's hand, and returned to their pleasant and comfortable home, while their little friends travelled out into the wide world, houseless wanderers.

When Mary reached home she buried her face in her mother's lap, saying, with a low voice,

"Mamma, shall we pray to God to take care of Bino and Zefi?"



The Adopted Daughter.

CHAPTER IX.

FOUND.

THE waggon had rolled slowly on its way for some hours, and had nearly reached the little town where the travellers were to dine. Cherubino had leaned his weary head against Zephirine's shoulder and fallen asleep; she holding her arm round him like a little mother, and thinking about the pretty doll and toys that Mary had given her at parting, and on all the wonderful things she meant to do the next winter. Mr. Lionet himself was taking a nap—when suddenly all were aroused from their dreams by a rough jerk, enough to break the rickety vehicle to pieces, which was followed immediately by loud and angry words from Francis. Mr. Lionet got out to see what was the matter, and found that a post-chaise had run into the van. Francis was abusing the "German beast," and the postillion swearing at the tumble-down conveyance; just at this moment a gentleman alighted from the chaise to make peace, and ascertain what damage had been done. He was still young, somewhat pale, and dressed in mourning. Mr. Lionet, who believed himself of as much importance as any gentleman in Germany, was about to approach him with great dignity, when the stranger rushed at Francis, looked searchingly in his face, and then, suddenly taking him by the collar, cried out:

"It's you, is it! Villain! where is my child?"

Francis, who would sooner have thought of the sky falling on him, than of this meeting, completely lost his presence of mind, and, pale and trembling, cried out:

The Adopted Daughter.

"For God's sake, Monsieur le Chevalier, let me go; he is living, indeed he is."

"Where?"

"Charming young gentleman!—Wonder-Child!—dances beautifully!"

"So that is what you have made my child into, is it?" said M. d'Ormont (for he it was), in an angry tone, and was going up to Lionet, who had retired respectfully on one side, when the two children, frightened at the noise, put their heads out of the window, and M. d'Ormont, catching a glimpse of them, ran to the carriage, and, without taking any notice of the girl, took out the boy, and, carrying him to the sunniest spot in the street, held him up towards the light. The generally timid child looked the stranger, with the greatest composure, long and fixedly in the eyes.

"Yes, thou art my child!" cried the father, weeping. "These are her eyes!"

Unmindful of the bystanders, he took the boy, and, seating himself on a bank, examined his countenance, stroked his face and kissed him, incapable of saying more than the words,

"Thou art my child! thou art my child!"

Although this change had come so suddenly, Cherubino seemed to understand it all, and gave himself up to his unknown father with perfect faith and trust, saying nothing, but looking at him with a friendly smile. Poor Zephirine was, however, dreadfully perplexed; turning from one to another, she begged them to tell her what was the matter, but nobody gave her an answer. Mr. Lionet and Francis knew well enough what they had to expect, and seemed inclined to take themselves quietly off, leaving Cherubino behind without opposition; but this was not so easily to be managed. The horse had suffered from the collision, and limped; and before they could put their plan into execution, M. d'Ormont, who had mastered his emotion, approached them with quiet dignity, saying,

"The high road is not the place for what we have to

The Adopted Daughter

say to each other. Drive on before; we will go to the same inn in the next town, and there talk over this matter."

Whether they would or not, Mr. Lionet was obliged to re-enter his equipage, and Francis to mount his box. Mr. d'Ormont took his boy with him in the chaise, and ordered the coachman to drive slowly behind the conjuror's waggon, and keep an eye on it; and whilst the coachman kept guard over the waggon, Mr. Lionet kept guard over Francis, who, he feared, would make off and leave him alone.

CHAPTER XI.

AN EXPLANATION.

WHILST M. d'Ormont has left the two children, who still feel as if they were in a dream, and cannot tell what has happened to them, in the bar-parlour of the inn, and is gone up stairs to examine, with locked doors, Mr. Lionet and Francis, we will quietly trace all the circumstances, and see how it comes that M. d'Ormont knew Francis, and believed with such certainty that the boy in the waggon was his son.

Francis, whose real name is Johann Brenner, had been valet to M. d'Ormont, and had been dismissed in consequence of theft and other bad conduct. Without the knowledge of his former master, he remained in the neighbourhood of his country seat,

The Adopted Daughter.

and kept up a secret intercourse with Margaret, the German nurse of his son.

With the commencement of the "Reign of Terror," justice and order were more than ever neglected, and under the mask of the law the castles of the nobles were attacked, plundered, and taken possession of by coarse soldiers. Johann was one of the first to join these wild bands, in the hope of profiting by the general disorder. M. d'Ormont had already thought of flight, and had only taken a short journey to obtain medical advice for his wife.

Johann made use of the time to break into the castle with some of his comrades, and to alarm the timid domestics to such a degree, that they fled in every direction. It had never been his intention to remain in the service of the French Republic, and he therefore persuaded Margaret that her master was already guillotined, and that what they did not take others would, and so induced her to agree that they should both take all the money and valuables they could find. Johann would like to have left the infant behind, but Margaret, who had a motherly love for her foster-child, insisted on taking it with her, and would consent on no other condition to appropriate the stolen articles.

They then proceeded with little Leon to Margaret's native place, but the bad consciences of both drove them quickly away again. Margaret became ill on their journey, and instead of their stolen wealth giving them the means of comfort and enjoyment, it gradually dwindled away in long years of homeless wandering. At length Margaret died, and on her death-bed begged Johann earnestly to find out the relatives of the child, and give him back to them—he had nothing to fear, he had only taken him away with good intentions.

Johann knew better, but still he would willingly have fulfilled Margaret's request, for his heart was not really bad, and her long illness and death had awakened his remorse; moreover, he did not know what to do

The Adopted Daughter.

with the child; but the state of France at that time prevented the possibility of his going there, even if he had had the means. M. d'Ormont's advertisement was unknown to him, and so he was glad at last to find, amongst a company of actors, a countryman of the name of Lionet, who at once discovered that the lovely boy and his own little daughter would make a very pretty pair, out of whom, he thought, he could make a good thing.

So Johann, now called Francis, received a nice sum of purchase-money for the child, who was christened Cherubino, and from that time forward passed for Lionet's son. As the boy continued to lead a wandering life, he soon lost all remembrances of the time before he lived with Zephyrine. Francis had nothing remaining of the property stolen from the castle, excepting a handsome signet-ring, engraved with M. d'Ormont's crest, which he had never dared to sell, for fear of its leading to a discovery, and which he now returned to the rightful owner.

On the first journey of M. d'Ormont to Margaret's native place, which was little known to him, he could ascertain nothing about her and the child. It was only after he had taken possession of his seat in Rhenish Prussia, where he took frequent walks in the neighbourhood, for the purpose of becoming acquainted with the country people, that he found out that, some years before, she had been there with a child, and in the company of a man, in whom, from the description, M. d'Ormont recognized his valet. Soon after this discovery he received Mr. Winter's letter, forwarded to him from Innspruch, in which that gentleman expressed his suspicions about the boy, and described the child and the whole party in the most detailed manner. The age corresponded exactly, and in the clown, M. d'Ormont believed he had found his Johann again. Many inquiries and proofs were certainly necessary, but the singular coincidence of the two pieces of information convinced the sanguine mind

The Adopted Daughter.

of the chevalier, when another would scarcely have found a ray of hope.

Without loss of time he set set off for Nuremberg, when on the way, as we have seen, he came in collision with Lionet's vehicle. A father, who thinks he has found his long lost child, does not weigh and calculate every trifle, and M. d'Ormont revelled in the possession of his newly found son, when, perhaps, a more cautious temperament would have required a longer investigation to confirm his hopes.

His father's heart had not deceived him; what he read in the child's gaze, who looked at him with his mother's eyes, was rendered surer by every future proof—little Cherubino was Leon d'Ormont, his own child.

Happy hearts bear no malice. The chevalier could easily have laid a complaint against Francis and Lionet for the robbery and sale of the child, but he was only too happy to find his boy again unharmed; so he promised to give back Lionet the sum which he had paid for his son, and hastened down stairs to his newly found treasure.

CHAPTER XI.

ANOTHER PARTING.

THE children sat together as we left them; Zephirine, who usually comprehended everything much more quickly than the boy, could understand nothing of the whole affair. Leon, as we will now call him,

The Adopted Daughter.

had only made out one thing clearly—that the gentleman was his father; and this he firmly persisted in against Zephirine, whom in general he never contradicted, although she endeavoured, amidst tears and laughter, to convince him that he belonged to her real papa.

The three now came down stairs, and M. d'Ormont, taking his child on his knee, explained to him quietly and clearly how everything had come to pass, and that he was his proper father. Leon needed no proof, nor did he consider how it was that, for the first time in his life, he felt so inexpressibly happy; he threw his arms round his father's neck, and rested on his bosom as though he would lie there all his life long.

M. d'Ormont had told his boy everything in the most careful manner, not wishing to awaken an aversion for Lionet and Francis. Leon had always had a liking for the latter, but had felt only too well, that his delicacy and melancholy had made him an object of dislike to Mr. Lionet; the parting from him would not be a trying one—but Zephirine? There sat the poor child in the old arm-chair, by the stove, in which the two had been sitting together, her hands lying listlessly in her lap, and her eyes fixed tearfully on Cherubino, resting in his father's arms. She did not yet understand all; only one thing was plain to her—that her little brother did not belong to her any more, and that was a trouble greater than her joyous heart had ever yet felt.

The landlord entered, and announced that dinner for the baron and the young gentleman was served up in an adjoining apartment. Mr. Lionet had also ordered dinner, and with a somewhat disrespectful air the landlord placed two covers for him on a table in the public room. M. d'Ormont rose, and, taking Leon by the hand, said, "Come to dinner, my boy."

Leon stretched out his hand towards Zephirine, saying at the same time, "Zefi must come too, papa."

His father did not seem very willing to accede to

The Adopted Daughter.

his wish, but Leon would not go without Zephirine, who looked back sympathizingly at her thin papa, left to eat his dinner alone. M. d'Ormont had another cover brought for her, and ordered everything good that was to be had; he also saw that Mr. Lionet received better fare. He talked cheerfully to the children, but they ate little and were very quiet, sitting with their hands clasped together, Zephirine looking sadly at Leon, who was full of silent joy.

After dinner M. d'Ormont got up, and, taking a bank-note out of his pocket-book, approached the conjuror.

"Although I am not very rich, having only been able to recover a part of my property," said he, "still I have provided myself well for this journey. I am happy, therefore, to have it in my power to repay you at once for what you have laid out; make use of the surplus for your little daughter, who has cheered the sad childhood of my son. Adieu.—Leon! you can take leave now." So saying, he went to order the carriage for their departure.

This all came much too quickly for Leon. In spite of the large sum of money he had received, Mr. Lionet was still somewhat cast down, and could not recover his cavalierly bearing. Leon offered him his hand with great timidity; he did not know exactly how he should approach the man whom he had so long respected, if not loved, as his father. To Francis, whose tears were falling fast, he gave a hearty kiss; but Zephirine! he fell on her neck weeping aloud; and when M. d'Ormont came to fetch him the two children were locked in each other's arms, unable to leave one another. "Father, O father! take Zefi with us! I cannot live without her—and you don't know how beautifully she can dance!" The poor boy little knew how this praise injured his cause with his father, who wished him to forget his previous life as quickly as possible. Whilst he stood undecided, Mr. Lionet—whose paternal love, the only good and healthy virtue in him, had restored

The Adopted Daughter.

a part of his usual dignity—approached M. d'Ormont, and, taking his little girl's hand, said, "This child is mine, and I would not part with her for all the treasures of the world: Zephirine, would you like to leave your poor papa? I should die of hunger without this child," added he, prosaically. It was a hard struggle for two such young hearts, and Leon would not give Zephirine up even when she had decided to remain with her father. At last M. d'Ormont, who had no desire to adopt the conjuror's daughter, concluded to take the two children to Nuremburg, and there, amongst their playfellows, gradually to separate Leon from Zephirine, so as to prepare him for a final parting. The chevalier begged Mr. Lionet to remain where he was: the latter agreed unwillingly enough, fearing that his child would be torn from him.

There was great rejoicing and curiosity when poor Bino returned to Nuremberg as young M. d'Ormont. Mary was delighted that an event should happen under her own eyes, which is generally only to be met in story-books. It was some time before Theodore could understand the whole course of things, but when he had done so he was also quite proud.

The happy father did not know how to make enough of his son; his pale face made him uneasy. He must learn to ride—drive out. He tried to read every wish in his eyes. Theodore must go out with him everywhere, whilst the girls were intentionally left behind.

Poor Zephirine's part was a sad one. She had hitherto always been the first, admired and flattered—not only Bino's sister, but his little mother, whose advice he asked in everything; but now, although well taken care of, she was put on one side as much as possible, with the view of parting her from Leon. All her time was not spent in play now—nobody cared about her dancing; and she was obliged to sit for hours, knitting or learning lessons, together with Mary. Although she acquired everything quickly, she yearned

The Adopted Daughter.

for her old free and unfettered life—her gay clothes—the dance—and applause of the public.

One evening, when Leon was gone out with his father, and Mary was visiting an aunt, Zephirine sat alone, her little heart feeling very heavy, she did not know why; all at once, she heard somebody calling her name in the street, and, looking out, she saw, by the light of the lamp, her father standing there and beckoning to her. With a cry of joy she flew down stairs and into his arms; he was her father and she had never experienced anything but love and kindness from him. He embraced her with tears.

"My dear child," cried he, "they don't bring you back, they will keep you and take you away altogether. Will you leave your poor old father alone?"

"No, no!" cried Zephirine; "I will go with you, and stop with you; Cherubino does not need me now; he has his father. Wait a little till I've said good-bye!"

She ran back again, and, hastily packing up her few clothes, hurried to Mrs. Winter.

"Mamma, dear mamma!" said she, in her vivacious manner, "my dear, old, right papa is waiting down stairs, and he is so lonely, I will go back again, and remain with him; give my love to Mary and Cherubino."

Here she burst into tears. Mrs. Winter tried to comfort her, and when she found out what the child meant, invited Mr. Lionet to come up stairs. Whilst he was partaking of some refreshment, and the good lady was putting Zephirine's things in order, Leon returned home with his father. M. d'Ormont was very glad when he heard Zephirine's decision, and made her a present almost beyond his means. Mr. Winter obtained Lionet's promise that he would look after his daughter's education, but little Leon was inconsolable that his Zefi would really leave him. At last the children tore themselves from each other, and Mr. Lionet lifted his little girl into the carriage which had been ordered by M. d'Ormont, and, wrapping her in a warm mantle, the gift of Mrs. Winter, drove off with her.

The Adopted Daughter.

CHAPTER XII.

THE BROTHER AND SISTER.

NEARLY two years have flown by since that parting, and we will turn our gaze to a small but pleasant country house, standing in the midst of a garden, in the vicinity of the beautiful Rhine. In a small saloon, the folding-doors of which were open to the pretty garden, a pale boy was resting on a sofa, and looking with weary eyes on the sunny walks, adorned on each side with the most beautiful autumn flowers. At a writing-table near him sat a gentleman, who looked at the boy every now and then with a troubled glance.

"Shall we not take a short walk, Leon?" asked he, kindly; "it is so beautiful out of doors."

"O no," said the child; "I am so tired, and the sun makes me ill."

"Will you look at your new book?"

"No; that makes my eyes ache so."

"Perhaps Otto will come to-day, and then he will play with you," said the anxious father, consolingly.

"I don't like him, he speaks so loudly, and is so rough," said the boy, in the fretful tone of an invalid.

"Only wait a little longer, dear Leon," began his father once more, "and we shall soon go back to France, and there it is so warm you will soon grow strong."

"Yes, yes," cried Leon, cheered for a moment, "and whilst we are travelling we may perhaps find Zephirine."

Just then M. d'Ormont's housekeeper came into the room.

"There is a beggar-girl at the front door asking for my young master, and she will not go away."

The Adopted Daughter.

M. d'Ormont rose unwillingly to send the importunate beggar away, when, quick as lightning, a tall, delicate-looking girl, about nine years of age, sunburnt, and in a ragged frock and old shoes, followed the housekeeper, and as soon as she cast her eyes on Leon, sprang to him, exclaiming, —

“Bino! Bino! my darling Bino!”

“Yes; this is my own Zephi,” cried he, stroking her disordered hair.

The rising anger of his father melted away at the sight of the children's bliss, who, laughing and crying by turns, sat looking at each other with clasped hands.

“Poor Cherubino, are you ill?” asked the little maid, compassionately, stroking his face. “You look so pale!”

“O, no, I am not ill,” said Leon, cheerfully; “I have only a little cough, but now you are here I shall be quite well again, and then we shall go to France soon, shall we not, papa?”

His father only nodded; his heart was too full to speak.

A new life seemed awakened in Leon, he gave orders, and arranged things as if he were sole master of the house, his father only smiling sadly at his zeal.

First Mrs. Lange, the housekeeper, must send in tea and everything good that she had, and then some clothes; but this last request was difficult to fulfil, for Mrs. Lange's were much too wide and long. At last a dress of one of the village girls was brought, Zephirine took it away with her, and, when she came back in the peasant's costume, well washed, and her black hair in long plaits, Leon clapped his hands with delight, and M. d'Ormont himself was astonished at the beauty of the girl.

“O, I can buy nice clothes for myself,” said she, with a certain pride, showing Leon a little purse quite filled gold.

“Then why did you come so ragged, you stupid Zephi?” asked he, in astonishment.

The Adopted Daughter.

"Because I was in such a hurry to come to you that I could not stop for anything ; and then, too, I would not show anybody the money, for you know it might have been easily taken from a little girl like me."

"But where have you come from, and how did you get here?" asked M. d'Ormont, to whom the possession of this large sum seemed suspicious; "has your father sent you?"

"Oh, no; poor papa died in trying to ride in the circus, through that disagreeable old mamma."

"Come, tell us properly everything that has happened to you since you left Nuremberg with your father."

"We went from there to Munich, where I went to the theatre again, and saw such beautiful dancing—oh, so beautiful! And papa took a housekeeper who washed and sewed for us, and taught me a little; she could not dance or anything of that sort, but she made very pretty wool flowers. When we stopped long in one place, papa sent me to school. We travelled about in this way for a long time, and we were nearly always fortunate, but still I was always wishing to see Cherubino. At last we came to a large town during the fair-time, and there was a circus, which papa took me to see. It was very beautiful; a stout woman had been riding round the ring, and got off her horse close to us, when papa suddenly called out "Julie!" and she "Aimé!" and there, it was the old mamma!"

"What mamma?"

"Why the old one, who was papa's wife before he married my mamma; he did not think she was living, but there she was, her other husband had died meanwhile, and she was very glad to see papa. She came to see us that evening, and I had to dance for her. She was delighted with my dancing, and told papa that we must remain with her troop, and that he would make a capital rider for the circus. We were with her a long time, but she was a disagreeable and bad woman; and Francis ran away. Once she pressed poor papa so to ride, that he tried, although his legs

The Adopted Daughter.

were so stiff, and a wicked boy struck his horse, and it threw him, and he was obliged to be carried to bed.

"He was ill for some time," continued the little one, in a broken voice. "Mamma scarcely ever came near him, but I always sat by his bed-side. Before he died, he told me where to find this nurse, which he had hid very safely, and he said he had been saving for me for a long time in secret — kind papa! and he wore such shabby coats himself! He told me, too, that I was not to stay with the troop; and he meant to write to Mr. Winter, but he was never able. Then he died, and our poor old fool carried him to the churchyard."

Here the poor child was interrupted by her tears, and Leon wept with her.

"They would not have let me leave them, but I went away without anybody knowing; first a carrier took me in his cart a long, long way. I used often to talk to Francis about you, dear Bino, and he had told me where you lived, and so I asked, and asked, and went, and went, O, for so many long days, and here I am!"

Of course M. d'Ormont did not think again of sending away the child, whose arrival appeared to have given new life to his invalid son. Zephirine was neatly dressed, and soon won all hearts by her gentleness, and bright and joyous spirit; but her name was always a subject of annoyance to M. d'Ormont, and she consented to have it changed. Leon christened her Leonie, and, although at first she said it was a very stupid name, she was soon called Leonie by the whole household.

A happy existence now began for the two children. Leonie's whole life was one act of love and devotion for the brother who was again restored to her. The latter was never too tired now to go into the garden when Leonie went with him, and found the nicest seats, or made bouquets, or twined wreaths, and found out a hundred pleasant games. She must share his lesson hours, and he often listened, with hearty laughter, to her ignorant questions, or again with pride to the

The Adopted Daughter.

teacher's praise of her abilities. His toys, books, everything seemed to become animated in Leonie's hands. Sometimes when the two were quite alone, she dressed her hair with flowers, looped up her skirts, and acted the little ballet dancer. Her little bed-room was adjoining M. d'Ormont's, in which Leon also slept, and often, when cough and fever prevented the poor boy from sleeping, she stole to his bed-side, and, holding his burning hand in hers, sang some soothing song in a low sweet voice, until at last he fell asleep. In the quiet morning and evening hours the children had their own special lesson together. Leon had received a beautiful illustrated Bible from his father, and now he was the teacher, showing the pictures to Leonie, and reading or relating the sacred stories. The impression of that morning when she had entered a church for the first time had never been effaced from her mind, as well as the recollection of the morning and evening prayers in Nuremberg. In the wandering life she had led since then, her prayers were nearly forgotten, but she had never passed a church without entering it, with a feeling of reverence. In the meantime, Leon, under the guidance of a pious clergyman, and the pleasant calm of his country home, was already familiar with that world which will be our everlasting abode. Bible stories were his favourites, and they received a new beauty when Leonie's sparkling eyes were fixed on him, whilst he told of the days when God himself spoke to mankind, as to his children, of the angels who entered Abraham's tent, and of the ladder between heaven and earth which Jacob saw in his dream. When Leon showed his sister a new picture—and she was only allowed to see one each day—his face beamed with smiles; it was so pleasant to be able, at last, to teach something to one who had always been a little mother to him. But when they came to the New Testament, where Christ called the little children to him and blessed them, and said, "of such is the kingdom of Heaven," Leonie's eyes filled with tears, and she held her brother's

The Adopted Daughter.

little hand fast in hers, as if she would not let him go. Young as she was, she had gone through much, and had an observant eye for the visible fading away of her darling.

Leon had lost nearly all his irritability and fretfulness, for his sister understood every wish, and spared him every annoyance. A spirit of peace and love had entered the house, and it seemed as if a continual sabbath was being celebrated.

Christmas came, and for the first time, under Mrs. Lange's directions, a Christmas tree was to be lighted. The children were sitting together in the dark, for Leon was obliged to spend more and more of his time on his couch; he had been telling the story of the first Christmas, of the song of the angels, and the shepherds' visit, when Leonie broke the silence which succeeded, by saying,

"I am so glad that the Saviour was born in a manger, because then he is sure to think of all the poor children who wander about the world like we used to do. I dare say he has often looked down on us sleeping in the cart, before we knew anything about him."

"Yes, and thought 'they shall yet be mine,'" whispered Leon.

Then the door opened, and a stream of light burst upon the astonished children's gaze: from amidst a mass of rich gifts, laid upon the table, rose the Christmas tree flaming with a hundred tapers. Leonie was the first to examine the beautiful presents spread out; she had been bountifully thought of, for M. d'Ormont had long acknowledged her as his child's good angel. A sky-blue merino frock, like the one Mary had once worn, nice little aprons, collars, and ribbons, such as the former little dancer liked so well; dolls and toys, and, on the top of all, a tambourine, that completed her happiness! and she was once more the same merry Zephyrine as of old. With unflagging energy and delight she helped Leon to look over his treasures;

The Adopted Daughter.

the one which seemed to give him the most pleasure, was a beautiful atlas, and looking eagerly for the map of France, he called out, "Come, father, tell me which way we shall go to France?"

Those present looked at each other with the sad thought, "Poor boy! you will make another journey." The excitement of Christmas had wearied the little invalid exceedingly, and he was confined more and more to his bed: but Leonie was as unwearied in her efforts to find fresh amusement for him, sitting by his sick couch, as when he was able to go about.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE END

THE winter passed slowly away; but March brought bright sunny days: when the windows of the sick chamber could be opened to let in the mild spring air, Leonie flew out like an imprisoned bird to seek the first flowers for her brother. One beautiful evening she came to his bed-side with a bunch of snowdrops and the first violet.

"Like Noah's dove, with the olive leaf, is it not, father?" said Leon to the latter.

"In France the flowers come earlier; the winter does not last so long," replied he.

"Father," said Leon, in a clearer voice than before, "I know quite well that I shall never go to France—but to a land where there is no winter. Our clergyman has told me so."

The Adopted Daughter.

His father bent over him to hide his tears.

"Where is Leonie?" asked the sick boy; "it is so dark."

"Here," whispered she, softly, from the other side of the bed.

"Father," continued he, smiling, "if we had not gone into the church that morning you would never have found me, and so God has led me to you, and you to him; is it not so?"

His father nodded assent.

"Leonie!" She took his hand, which was icy cold. "Leonie, do you remember the day when the door flew open, and you sprang in, and have remained with us ever since? Do you remember?"

"O yes," said she, gently.

"When I am gone to my Heavenly home and live with God, some day the door will open there, and you will come and live with me for ever and ever, will you not?"

It was dark in the room, and the invalid fell asleep—never to awake again.

It was again autumn, and the most beautiful flowers of the season decked Leon's grave, which was an ever-blooming flower-garden. Leonie tended it morning and evening, spending nearly as much time there as M. d'Ormont himself: she had often accompanied the latter, silently and with bitter tears. But gradually the colour had returned to her cheek, the lustre to her eye, and the elasticity to her step; the old, sweet smile lighted up her countenance; and if she was not again the gay, volatile Zeriphine, she was the cheerful Leonie, who had brightened her brother's last days.

M. d'Ormont saw this with pleasure: he knew that sorrow cannot press down the young heart for ever, and he knew also that her brother's memory was not the less cherished. "Leonie," said he to her one day, "you

The Adopted Daughter.

know, my dear child, that my house is your home, but it is a sad one, and you are young and have a long life before you. They told me in Nuremberg that your vocation was a professional life. I do not mean that you shall travel about the world in a waggon, like you did with your poor father; but I will take you to a large city, and there you shall learn what art really is. You are sensible beyond your years; think about it, my child, until morning, whether you will return to the gay, old, artiste life again, or not."

Leonie reflected on her adopted father's proposal, and slept little during the night following. All the splendour of the theatres she had seen in large cities—the swelling music—the beautiful costumes—the enchantment which lay in this varied world passed before her, and she felt her heart beat as it had done in the old days with joyous anticipations, when she thought "Thou, too, shalt enter this fairy land." Then a very different picture presented itself—the sad death-bed of her father, and the peaceful departure of Leon; and as towards morning she fell into a slumber her mind was at rest, for she had made her choice.

The next morning she went with her father as usual to Leon's grave, and, whilst standing there, said, "Do you remember, father, what Leon said before he died? That some day a door would open above, and I should come and remain with him for ever and ever, just as I came to you here once? I don't know properly if it is a sin to lead such a life as poor papa did, and the beautiful ladies on the stage, but I think it makes it harder to get to heaven. As long as I danced I could not think seriously about God and Christ, and therefore I would rather find the way to heaven as I once found it to you, quietly toiling onwards. If you think I had better learn more send me to Nuremberg, but let me come back again and be your child—you are so lonely."

M. d'Ormont felt the child's decision was the right one, and she was sent to Nuremberg as she wished,

The Adopted Daughter.

where she was received with all former kindness, and she had much to tell of her darling Bino; and when M. d'Ormont returned at last to his ancestral estate, his faithful little daughter Leonie accompanied him, grown into a pious and lovely maiden. In no time of joy or sorrow, did she forget to think of the hour when she might rejoin her brother in the realms of bliss.





PATTY'S PATCHWORK.

"**I** PERFECTLY hate it! and something dreadful ought to be done to the woman who invented it," said Patty, in a pet, sending a shower of gay pieces flying over the carpet as if a small whirlwind and a rainbow had got into a quarrel.

Puss did not agree with Patty, for, after a surprised hop when the flurry came, she calmly laid herself down on a red square, purring comfortably and winking her yellow eyes, as if she thanked the little girl for the bright bed that set off her white fur so prettily. This cool performance made Patty laugh and say more pleasantly,—

"Well, it *is* tiresome, isn't it, Aunt Pen?"

"Sometimes; but we all have to make patchwork, my dear, and do the best we can with the pieces given us."

"Do we?" and Patty opened her eyes in great astonishment at this new idea.

"Our lives are patchwork, and it depends on us a good deal how the bright and dark bits get put together so that the whole is neat, pretty, and useful when it is done," said Aunt Pen.

Patty's Patchwork.

"Dear me, now she is going to preach," thought Patty; but she rather liked Aunt Pen's preachments, for a good deal of fun got mixed up with the moralizing; and she was so good herself that children could never say in their naughty little minds, "You are just as bad as we, so you needn't talk to us, ma'am."

"I gave you that patchwork to see what you would make of it, and it is as good as a diary to me, for I can tell by the different squares how you felt when you made them," continued Aunt Pen, with a twinkle in her eye as she glanced at the many-coloured bits on the carpet.

"Can you truly? just try and see," and Patty looked interested at once.

Pointing with the yard-measure, Aunt Pen said, tapping a certain dingy, puckered, brown and purple square,—

"That is a bad day; doesn't it look so?"

"Well, it was, I do declare! for that was the Monday piece, when every thing went wrong and I didn't care how my work looked," cried Patty, surprised at Aunt Pen's skill in reading the calico diary.

"This pretty pink and white one so neatly sewed is a good day; this funny mixture of red, blue, and yellow with the big stitches is a merry day; that one with spots on it is one that got cried over; this with the gay flowers is a day full of good little plans and resolutions; and that one made of dainty bits, all stars and dots and tiny leaves, is the one you made when you were thinking about the dear new baby there at home."

"Why, Aunt Pen, you are a fairy! How *did* you know? they truly are just as you say, as near as I can remember. I rather like that sort of patchwork," and Patty sat down upon the floor to collect, examine, and arrange her discarded work with a new interest in it.

"I see what is going on, and I have queer plays in my mind just as you little folks have. Suppose you

Patty's Patchwork.

make this a moral bed-quilt as some people make album quilts. See how much patience, perseverance, good nature, and industry you can put into it. Every square will have a lesson or a story, and when you lie under it you will find it a real comforter," said Aunt Pen, who wanted to amuse the child and teach her something better even than the good old-fashioned accomplishment of needlework.

"I don't see how I can put that sort of thing into it," answered Patty, as she gently lifted puss into her lap, instead of twitching the red bit roughly from under her.

"There goes a nice little piece of kindness this very minute," laughed Aunt Pen, pointing to the cat and the red square.

Patty laughed also, and looked pleased as she stroked Mother Bunch, while she said thoughtfully,—

"I see what you mean now. I am making two kinds of patchwork at the same time; and this that I see is to remind me of the other kind that I don't see."

"Every task, no matter how small or homely, that gets well and cheerfully done, is a fine thing; and the sooner we learn to use up the dark and bright bits (the pleasures and pains, the cares and duties) into a cheerful, useful life, the sooner we become real comforters, and every one likes us. Don't you see, deary?"

"That's what you are, Aunt Pen;" and Patty put up her hand to hold fast by that other strong, kind, helpful hand that did so much, yet never was tired, cold, or empty.

Aunt Pen took the chubby little one in both her own, and said, smiling, yet with meaning in her eyes, as she tapped the small forefinger, rough with impatient and unskilful sewing,—

"Shall we try and see what a nice little comforter we can make this month, while you wait to be called home to see mamma and the dear new baby?"

Patty's Patchwork.

"Yes, I'd like to try;" and Patty gave Aunt Pen's hand a hearty shake, for she wanted to be good, and rather thought the new fancy would lend a charm to the task which we all find rather tiresome and hard.

So the bargain was made, and the patch Patty sewed that day was beautiful to behold; for she was in a delightfully moral state of mind, and felt quite sure that she was going to become a model for all children to follow, if they could. The next day her ardour had cooled a little, and being in a hurry to go out to play, she slighted her work, thinking no one would know. But the third day she got so angry with her patch that she tore it in two, and declared it was all nonsense to fuss about being good and thorough and all the rest of it.

Aunt Pen did not say much, but made her mend and finish her patch and add it to the pile. After she went to bed that night Patty thought of it, and wished she could do it over, it looked so badly. But as it could not be, she had a penitent fit, and resolved to keep her temper while she sewed, at any rate, for mamma was to see the little quilt when it was done, and would want to know all about it.

One day she said to herself as she took up her work, "Now I'll puzzle Aunt Pen. She thinks my naughty tricks get into the patches; but I'll make this very nicely and have it gay, and then I don't see how she will ever guess what I did this morning."

Now you must know that Tweedle-dee the canary, was let out every day to fly about the room and enjoy himself. Mother Bunch never tried to catch him, though he often hopped temptingly near her.

Patty was forbidden to chase or touch him at these times, but always felt a strong desire to have just one grab at him and see how he felt. That day, being alone in the dining-room, she found it impossible to resist; and when Tweedle-dee came tripping pertly over the table-cloth, cocking his head on one side with

Patty's Patchwork.

shrill chirps and little prancings, she caught him, and for a minute held him fast in spite of his wrathful pecking.

She put her thimble on his head, laughing to see how funny he looked, and just then he slipped out of her hand. She clutched at him, missed him, but alas ! alas ! he left part of his little tail behind him ; and there sat Patty with the yellow feathers in her hand and dismay in her face. Poor Tweedle-dee retired to his cage much afflicted, and sang no more that day, but Patty hid the lost feathers and never said a word about it.

"Aunt Pen is so near-sighted she won't mind, and maybe he will have another tail pretty soon, or she will think he is moulting. If she asks of course I shall tell her."

Patty settled it in that way, forgetting that the slide was open and Aunt Pen in the kitchen. So she made a neat blue and buff patch, and put it away, meaning to puzzle aunty when the reading-time came. But Patty got the worst of it, as you will see by and by.

Another day she strolled into the store-room and saw a large tray of fresh buns standing there. Now, it was against the rule to eat between meals, and new hot bread or cake was especially forbidden. Patty remembered both these things, but could not resist temptation. One plump, brown bun, with a lovely plum right in the middle, was so fascinating it was impossible to let it alone ; so Patty whipped it into her pocket, ran to the garden, and hiding behind the big lilac-bush, ate it in a great hurry. It was just out of the oven, and so hot it burned her throat, and lay like a live coal in her little stomach after it was down, making her very uncomfortable for several hours.

"Why do you keep sighing?" asked Aunt Pen, as Patty sat down to her work.

"I don't feel very well."

Patty's Patchwork.

"You have eaten something that disagrees with you. Did you eat hot biscuits for breakfast?"

"No, ma'am, I never do," and Patty gave another little gasp, for the bun lay very heavily on both stomach and conscience just then.

"A drop or two of ammonia will set you right," and Aunt Pen gave her some. It did set the stomach right, but the conscience still worried her, for she could not make up her mind to confess the sly, greedy thing she had done.

"Put a white patch in the middle of those green ones," said Aunt Pen, as Patty sat sewing her daily square.

"Why?" asked the little girl, for aunty seldom interfered in her arrangement of the quilt.

"It will look pretty, and match the other three squares that are going at the corners of that middle piece."

"Well, I will," and Patty sewed away, wondering at this sudden interest in her work, and why Aunt Pen laughed to herself as she put away the ammonia bottle.

These are two of the naughty little things that got worked into the quilt; but there were good ones also, and Aunt Pen's sharp eyes saw them all.

At the window of a house opposite Patty often saw a little girl who sat there playing with an old doll or a torn book. She never seemed to run about or go out, and Patty often wondered if she was ill, she looked so thin and was so quiet. Patty began by making faces at her for fun, but the little girl only smiled back, and nodded so good-naturedly that Patty was ashamed of herself.

"Is that girl over there poor?" she asked suddenly as she watched her one day.

"Very poor: her mother takes in sewing, and the child is lame," answered Aunt Pen, without looking up from the letter she was writing.

"Her doll is nothing but an old shawl tied round

Patty's Patchwork.

with a string, and she seems to have only one book. I wonder if she'd like to have me come and play with her?" said Patty to herself, as she stood her own big doll in the window, and nodded back at the girl, who bobbed up and down in her chair with delight at this agreeable prospect.

"You can go and see her some day if you like," said Aunt Pen, scribbling away.

Patty said no more then, but later in the afternoon she remembered this permission, and resolved to try if aunty would find out her good doings as well as her bad ones. So, tucking *Bianche Augusta Arabella Maud* under one arm, her best picture-book under the other, and gathering a little nosegay of her own flowers, she slipped across the road, knocked, and marched boldly upstairs.

Mrs. Brown, the seamstress, was out, and no one there but Lizzie in her chair at the window, looking lonely and forlorn.

"How do you do? My name is Patty, and I live over there, and I've come to play with you," said one child in a friendly tone.

"How do you do? My name is Lizzie, and I'm very glad to see you. What a lovely doll!" returned the other child gratefully; and then the ceremony of introduction was over, and they began to play as if they had known each other for ever so long.

To poor Lizzie it seemed as if a little fairy had suddenly appeared to brighten the dismal room with flowers and smiles and pretty things; while Patty felt her pity and good-will increase as she saw Lizzie's crippled feet, and watched her thin face brighten and glow with interest and delight over book and doll and posy. "It felt good," as Patty said afterwards; "like something warm and comfortable in my heart, and I liked it ever so much." She stayed an hour, making sunshine in a shady place, and then ran home, wondering if Aunt Pen would find that out.

She found her sitting with her hands before her, and

Patty's Patchwork.

such a sad look in her face that Patty ran to her, saying anxiously,—

"What's the matter, aunty? Are you ill?"

"No, dear; but I have sorrowful news for you. Come sit in my lap and let me tell you as gently as I can."

"Mamma is dead!" cried Patty, with a look of terror in her rosy face.

"No, thank God! but the dear, new baby only stayed a week, and we shall never see her in this world."

With a cry of sorrow Patty threw herself into the arms outstretched to her, and on Aunt Pen's loving bosom sobbed away the first bitterness of her grief and disappointment.

"Oh, I wanted a little sister so much, and I was going to be so fond of her, and was so glad she came, and now I can't see or have her even for a day! I'm so disappointed I don't think I *can* bear it," sobbed Patty.

"Think of poor mamma, and bear it bravely for her sake," whispered Aunt Pen, wiping away her own and Patty's tears.

"Oh, dear me! there's the pretty quilt I was going to make for baby, and now it isn't any use, and I can't bear to finish it;" and Patty broke out afresh at the thought of so much love's labour lost.

"Mamma will love to see it, so I wouldn't give it up. Work is one of the best cures for sorrow; and I think you never will be sorry you tried it. Let us put a bright bit of submission into this dark trouble, and work both into your little life as patiently as we can, deary."

Patty put up her trembling lips, and kissed Aunt Pen, grateful for the tender sympathy and the helpful words. "I'll try," was all she said; and then they sat talking quietly together about the dear, dead baby, who only stayed long enough to make a place in every one's heart, and leave them aching when she went.

Patty did try to bear her first trouble bravely, and Lizzie was full of sympathy, and came hopping over

Patty's Patchwork.

on her crutches with her only treasure, a black rabbit, to console her friend. But of all the comfort given, Mother Bunch's share was the greatest and best; for that very first sad day, as Patty wandered about the house disconsolately, puss came hurrying to meet her, and in her dumb way begged her mistress to follow and see the fine surprise prepared for her. Four plump kits as white as snow, with four gray tails all wagging in a row, as they laid on their proud mamma's downy breast, while she purred over them with her yellow eyes full of supreme content.

As Patty lay on the rug that evening while Aunt Pen sang softly in the twilight, a small white figure came pattering over the straw carpet, and dropped a soft, warm ball down by Patty's cheek, saying, as plainly as a loud, confiding purr could say it,—

"There, my dear, this is a lonely time for you, I know, so I've brought my best and prettiest darling to comfort you;" and with that Mother Bunch sat down and washed her face, while Patty cuddled little Snowdrop, and forgot to cry about baby.

Soon after this came a great happiness to Patty in the shape of a letter from mamma, saying she must have her little girl back a week earlier than they had planned.

"I'm sorry to leave you, aunty, but it is so nice to be wanted, and I'm all mamma has now, you know, so I must hurry and finish my work to surprise her with. How shall we finish it off? There ought to be something regularly splendid to go all round," said Patty, in a great bustle, as she laid out her pieces, and found that only a few more were needed to complete the "moral bed-quilt."

"I must try and find something. We will put this white star, with the blue round it, in the middle, for it is the neatest and prettiest piece, in spite of the stains. I will sew in this part, and you may finish putting the long strips together," said Aunt Pen, rummaging her bags and bundles for something fine to end off with.

Patty's Patchwork.

"I know! I've got something!" and away hurried Lizzie, who was there, and much interested in the work.

She came hopping back again, presently, with a roll in her hand, which she proudly spread out, saying,—

"There! mother gave me that ever so long ago, but I never had any quilt to use it for, and now it's just what you want. You can't buy such chintz now-a-days, and I'm *so* glad I had it for you."

"It's regularly splendid!" cried Patty, in a rapture; and so it was, for the pink and white were all covered with animals, and the blue was full of birds and butterflies and bees flying about as naturally as possible. Really lovely were the little figures and the clear, soft colours, and Aunt Pen clapped her hands, while Patty hugged her friend, and declared that the quilt was perfect now.

Mrs. Brown begged to be allowed to quilt it when the patches were all nicely put together, and Patty was glad to let her, for that part of the work was beyond her skill. It did not come home till the morning Patty left, and Aunt Pen packed it up without ever unrolling it.

"We will look at it together when we show it to mamma," she said; and Patty was in such a hurry to be off that she made no objection.

A pleasant journey, a great deal of hugging and kissing, some tears and tender laments for baby, and then it was time to show the quilt, which mamma said was just what she wanted to throw over her feet as she lay on the sofa.

If there *were* any fairies, Patty would have been sure they had done something to her bed-cover, for when she proudly unrolled it, what do you think she saw?

In each of the four gay squares that were at the corners of the strip that framed the star, was a white bit bearing pictures and couplets that both pleased and abashed Patty as she saw and read them.

Patty's Patchwork.

In one was seen a remarkably fine bun, with the lines,—

"Who stole the hot bun
And got burnt well?
Go ask the lilac bush,
For it can tell."

In the next was a plump, tailless bird, who seemed to be saying mournfully,—

"My little tail, my little tail!
This bitter loss I still bewail;
But rather ne'er have tail again
Than Patty should deceive Aunt Pen."

The third was less embarrassing, for it was a pretty bunch of flowers so daintily drawn one could almost think one smelt them, and these lines were underneath:—

"Every flower to others given,
Blossoms fair and sweet in heaven."

The fourth was a picture of a curly-haired child sewing, with some very large tears rolling down her cheeks and tumbling off her lap like marbles, while some tiny sprites were catching and flying away with them as if they were very precious:—

"Every tender drop that fell,
Loving spirits caught and kept;
And Patty's sorrow lighter grew
For the gentle tears she wept."

"Oh, aunty! what does it all mean?" cried Patty, who had looked both pleased and ashamed as she glanced from one picture to the other.

"It means, dear, that the goods and bads got into the bed-quilt in spite of you, and there they are to tell their own story. The bun and the lost tail, the posy you took

Patty's Patchwork.

to poor Lizzie, and the trouble you bore so sweetly. It is just so with our lives, though we don't see it quite as clearly as this. Invisible hands paint our faults and virtues, and by-and-bye we have to see them, so we must be careful that they are good and lovely, and we are not ashamed to let the eyes that love us best read there the history of our lives."

As Aunt Pen spoke, and Patty listened with a thoughtful face, mamma softly drew the pictured coverlet over her, and whispered, as she held her little daughter close,—

"My Patty will remember this ; and if all her years tell as good a story as this month, I shall not fear to read the record, and she will be in truth my little comforter."





DANDELION.

DOWN by the sea lived Ben the fisherman, with his wife, and little son, who was called Dandelion, because he wore yellow pinafores, and had curly, yellow hair, that covered his head with a golden fuzz. A very happy family, for Ben was kind and industrious, Hetty, his wife, a cheerful, busy creature, and Dandelion the jolliest three-year-old baby who ever made sand-pies and paddled on the beach.

But one day a great trouble came to them. Ben and his fellow-fishermen sailed blithely away as usual, and Hetty watched the fleet of white-winged boats out of the bay, thinking how pretty they looked with the sunshine on them; while Dandelion stood clapping his chubby hands, and saying, as he always did, "Daddy tummin' soon." But Daddy did not come soon that time; for a great storm arose, and when some of the boats came scudding home at nightfall, Ben's was not among them. All night the gale raged, and in the morning, Ben's boat lay empty and broken on the shore. His mates shook their heads when they saw the wreck, and drew their rough hands over their eyes; for Ben was a good seaman, and they knew he never would desert his boat alive. They looked for him far and

Dandelion.

wide, but could hear nothing of him, and felt sure that he had perished in the storm. They tried to comfort poor Hetty, but she would not be comforted. Her heart seemed broken ; and if it had not been for her baby, her neighbours feared that she would have gone to join Ben in his grave under the sea. Dandelion did not understand why every one was so sad, and why his father stayed away so long ; but he never lost his cheerfulness, never gave up hoping, or stopped saying, with a contented smile, "Daddy tummin' soon." The sunshiny little face was Hetty's only comfort. The sight of the fuzzy yellow head, bobbing round the house, alone made it endurable ; and the touch of the loving baby hands kept her from the despair which made her long to end her sorrow in the sea.

People don't believe in fairies now-a-days ; nevertheless, good spirits still exist, and help us in our times of trouble, better even than the little people we used to read about. One of these household spirits is called Love, and it took the shape of Dandelion to comfort poor Hetty. Another is called Labour ; a beautiful, happy spirit this is, and it did its part so well that there was little time for bitter thoughts or vain regrets ; for Hetty's spinning-wheel must go, in order to earn bread for Dandelion, whose mouth was always ready for food like a hungry bird's. Busily hummed the wheel ; and, as it flew, it seemed to catch an echo of the baby's cheerful song, saying, over and over, "Daddy tummin' soon," till Hetty stopped crying as she worked, and listened to the cheerful whirr.

"Yes, I shall see my good Ben again, if I wait patiently. Baby takes comfort in saying that, and I will, too ; though the poor dear will get tired of it soon," she said.

But Dandelion didn't get tired. This idea was so strong that the child gathered together his store of toy-boats,—for he had many, as they were his favourite playthings,—and launched them, one after another, telling them to find his father, and bring him home. -

Dandelion.

As Dandelion was not allowed to play on the beach, except at low tide, the little boats sailed safely away on the receding waves, and the child was sure that some of them would get safely into the distant port where Daddy was waiting. All the boats were launched at last, all sailed bravely away ; but none came back, and little Dandy was much disappointed. He babbled about it to himself ; told the peeps and the horse-shoes, the snails and the lobsters, of his trouble ; begged the gulls to fly away and find Daddy ; and every windy night, when the sea dashed on the shore and the shutters rattled, he would want the lamp put in the window, as it used to be when they expected Ben, and tried to make home look cheerful, even before he got there.

Hetty used to humour the child, though it made her heart ache to know that the light shone in vain. At such times Dandy would prance about the room in his little shirt, and talk about Daddy as happily as if long months had not passed without bringing him back. When fairly in his big, old-fashioned cradle, the boy would lie, looking more like a dandelion than ever, in his yellow flannel night-gown, playing with his toes, or rocking himself to and fro, calling the cradle his boat, and blithely telling his mother that he was sailing "far away to find Daddy."

Six long months went by, and no one ever thought of seeing Ben again,—no one but his little son, who still watched for him here, and his wife, who waited to meet him hereafter.

One bright spring day something happened. The house was as tidy as ever ; the wheel hummed briskly as Hetty sang softly to herself with a cheerful face, though there were white hairs among the brown, and her eyes had a thoughtful absent look at times. Dandelion, more chubby and cheery than ever, sat at her feet, with the sunshine making a golden glory of his yellow hair, as he tried his new boat in the tub of water his mother kept for her little sailor, or tugged

Dandelion.

away with his fat fingers at a big needle which he was trying to pull through a bit of cloth intended for a sail. Sitting so, neither heard a step come softly over the sand; neither saw an eager, brown face peer in at the door; and neither knew, for a minute, that Ben was watching them, with a love and longing in his heart that made him tremble like a woman.

Dandelion saw him first; for, as he pulled the thread through with a triumphant jerk, the small sailmaker lost his balance, tumbled over, and lay staring up at the tall man with his blue eyes so wide open, they looked as if they would never shut again.

All of a sudden, he shouted, with a joyful shout, "Daddy's tummin'!" and the next instant vanished, ship and all, in the arms of the man who wore the rough jacket. Over went the spinning-wheel, as Hetty vanished likewise; and for a time there was nothing but sobbing and kissing, clinging, and thanking Heaven for its kindness to them. When they grew quieter, and Ben got into his old chair, with his wife on one knee and his boy on the other, he told them how he was wrecked in the gale, picked up by an outward-bound ship, and only able to get back after months of sickness and delay.

"My boaty fetched him," said Dandelion, feeling that everything had turned out just as he expected.

"So it did, my precious; leastways, your faith helped, I haven't a doubt," cried Hetty, hugging the curly-headed prophet close, as she told Ben all that happened.



